

Guidelines for Scabies Outbreaks in Institutions (Health Care Facilities, Prisons, Dormitories, Shelters)

Define the outbreak...

Outbreak Definition: two or more consecutive cases of scabies among residents/staff within 4-6 week.

Case Definition: *Confirmed case:* is an individual who has skin scraping with identified mites, mite eggs or mite feces. *Probable case:* is an individual with clinical symptoms of scabies (persistent pruritic rash). *Contact case:* is anyone with a close skin-to-skin contact with a case

Incubation Period: 2-6 weeks for first time infection and 1-4 days for repeated infection.

Communicability: 2 weeks after the original infestation even with asymptomatic individuals. A patient is no longer infectious 24 hours after effective treatment

When you have an outbreak...

1. Confirm the diagnosis → refer to a physician or consult a dermatologist and report to your local health department.
2. Begin line listing of ill persons (including residents, staff, and close contacts), complete for duration of outbreak (until you have no new case for two incubation periods 6-12 weeks).
3. Conduct a thorough search for atypical/unrecognized cases
4. Institute mass education of residents and staff and provide information to visitors and staff family members.
5. Hold new admissions until the outbreak is controlled.

To help control the spread of infection...

1. Cases and contacts
 - Isolate confirmed and suspected cases under contact precautions and exclude from social activities or patient care until 24 hours after treatment.
 - Patient with crusted or atypical (Norwegian) scabies should be isolated until negative skin scrapings or patient is asymptomatic.
 - Identify, treat and educate all close contacts. Cases should be simultaneously treated with contacts to avoid reinfection.
 - Cohort staff so only one group cares/attends the ill residents.
 - Do not transfer patients without notifying the accepting facility of the diagnosis of scabies.
2. Treatment
 - Day 1 (p.m.) clip nails → bathe or shower → apply 5% Permethrin cream to all skin areas from the neck down and under nails.
 - Day 2 (a.m.) bathe or shower to remove the cream and note that itching may continue for weeks.
 - Day 14 and Day 28: reexamine and retreat if there are persistent or recurrent lesions.
3. Ill staff and their contacts should be treated similarly before returning to work.
4. Offer treatment to household contacts of staff who are receiving scabies treatment.
5. Ill staff may need to use gloves for several days until sure they are no longer infested.
6. Environmental measures:
 - Machine wash and dry bedding and clothing of scabies patients using the hot water and hot dryer cycles.
 - Items that cannot be laundered or dry cleaned should be placed in sealed plastic bags for 7 days.
 - Routine cleaning and vacuuming should provide adequate environmental control.

REMEMBER: Outbreaks are immediately reportable to your local health department!

For further questions or information contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 304-558-5358 or 800-423-1271 or visit us on the web at www.wvdehp.org